

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

S E C R E T STATE 260386

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BM, US

SUBJECT: FY 1976 PARA - BURMA

REF: RANGOON 3212

1. THE DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES THE EMBASSY'S INITIATIVE IN DRAFTING PARA SECTION I PRIOR TO THE RECEIPT OF SECTION II, WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED AND WAS IN THE CLEARANCE PROCESS WHEN YOUR CABLE ARRIVED. WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED NSC CLEARANCE ON OUR DRAFT, WHICH FOLLOWS AS PARAGRAPH 4 BELOW FOR YOUR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN MAKING ANY CHANGES DEEMED NECESSARY IN SECTION I AND IN THE PREPARATION OF SECTIONS III AND IV.

2. BECAUSE OF THE DESIRE TO DRAW UPON THE PREVIOUS PARA AND IN VIEW OF THE ABSENCE OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE GUB, SECTION II IN GENERAL REPEATS THE US POLICY SECTION OF THE FY 74 PARA. IT WILL BE NOTICED THAT, EXCEPT FOR THE FORMAT, YOUR PROPOSED SECTION II DOES NOT DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM THE APPROVED TEXT. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT OUR TEXT CARRIES THE NUANCE OF A SLIGHTLY MORE

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POSITIVE US POLICY STANCE, BUT THE DIFFERENCE IS MINIMAL.

3. AS REGARDS SECTION I, WE ARE IN SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENT, BUT WOULD FOREGO AN ATTEMPT TO RANK INTERESTS BY PRIORITY-- AND WE HAVE AVOIDED THIS IN ALL PARA'S. IN OUR VIEW, INTERESTS IDENTIFY THE US LONG-TERM, ABIDING STAKE IN A PARTICULAR COUNTRY--WHAT THE US ULTIMATELY (OVER THE NEXT TEN TO TWENTY YEARS) WANTS TO SEE COME INTO BEING, OR TO BE PRESERVED, IN THAT COUNTRY. THUS, A STATEMENT OF US INTERESTS DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO PRIORITY RANKING. INSTEAD, THE ASSIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES SHOULD BE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE EXPLICATION OF POLICY IN TERMS OF COURSES OF ACTION. AS SUCH, THE QUESTION OF PRIORITIES SHOULD BE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TASKS OF THE PARA AS A POLICY IMPLEMENTING EXERCISE.

4. THE COUNTRY BACKGROUND SUB-SECTION IS FRANK AND CANDID IN DEFINING PROBLEMS AND WEAKNESSES, IN ASSESSING THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF CONCEIVABLE SITUATIONS ON US INTERESTS, AND IN DESCRIBING THE SOMEWHAT MORE OPEN GUB POSTURE TOWARD THE OUTSIDE. THE FRAMEWORK SECTION IS ACCURATE. IN SUM, WE MAY WISH TO CONDENSE YOUR SECTION I, ESPECIALLY THE BACKGROUND SUB-SECTION, BUT WE BASICALLY AGREE WITH IT.

5. TEXT OF SECTION II:

II. UNITED STATES POLICY

A. GENERAL. THE POLICY FRAMEWORK DESCRIBED IN THE FY 74 BURMA PARA IN GENERAL REMAINS VALID. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD CONTINUE ITS TRADITIONAL LOW PROFILE APPROACH TO THE GUB, DESPITE INCREASINGLY EVIDENT SIGNS THAT BURMA IS BEGINNING TO MOVE FROM THE STERILE RIGIDITY OF PAST NATIONAL POLICIES. WHILE THE U.S. SHOULD BE EXPLORING SOMEWHAT MORE POSITIVE WAYS TO PURSUE OUR OBJECTIVES, THIS LOW PROFILE APPROACH IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ACCEPTABILITY OF US PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES IN BURMA. IT IS ALSO CONSISTENT WITH THE LIMITED RESOURCES WE CAN EXPECT TO HAVE AVAILABLE. NONETHELESS, WE MAY IN THE PERIOD AHEAD BE ABLE TO DO MORE THAN SEEMED POSSIBLE IN THE PAST.

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AGAINST THIS GENERAL POLICY FRAMEWORK, SPECIFIC POLICIES LISTED BY CATEGORIES FOLLOWS.

B. POLITICAL/SECURITY

-- SUPPORT BURMA'S TRADITIONAL POLICY OF NEUTRALITY AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN OTHER NATIONS' INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

-- REFRAIN FROM OPEN CRITICISM OF THE PRESENT REGIME'S IDEOLOGY OR ADMINISTRATION.

-- MAKE CLEAR TO FRIENDLY COUNTRIES IN EAST ASIA, WHERE APPROPRIATE, THAT WE SUPPORT THEIR EFFORTS TO DRAW BURMA INTO THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE REGION.

-- ENCOURAGE RESOLUTION OF THE ENDEMIC INSURGENCIES IN BURMA WITHOUT BECOMING INVOLVED IN OR IDENTIFIED WITH GUB POLICIES TOWARDS INSURGENTS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES.

-- ADVISE, WHEN APPROPRIATE, BURMA'S NEIGHBORS TO DESIST FROM THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH BURMESE INSURGENT GROUPS.

-- ESCHEW CLANDESTINE INVOLVEMENT IN BURMESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DISCOURAGE U.S. PRIVATE INTERESTS FROM SUCH ACTIVITIES AS PART OF MAINTAINING A "LOW PROFILE."

-- MAKE POSITIVE EFFORTS TO REMOVE UNNECESSARY IRRITANTS TO US-BURMESE AND BURMESE-THAI RELATIONS, TO THE EXTENT THAT A CAREFUL APPLICATION OF US INFLUENCE WILL HELP, IN ORDER TO REDUCE BURMESE SUSPICIONS AND UNWILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

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-- AVOID THE APPEARANCE OR ACTUALITY OF PRESSING GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ON BURMA, BUT BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS ITS SECURITY NEEDS UNDER FMS PROCEDURES IF RAISED AT BURMESE INITIATIVE.

C. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL

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-- CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO U.S. BUSINESS FIRMS SEEKING COMMERCIAL CONTACTS AND MARKETS IN BURMA.

-- ENCOURAGE BURMA TO SEEK NOT ONLY ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE FROM INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, BUT ALSO THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE FORMATION OF A CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF AID DONORS. WE WILL SUPPORT, AS APPROPRIATE, BURMESE REQUESTS TO THESE INSTITUTIONS FOR ASSISTANCE.

-- DISCREETLY ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC REFORM ON THE BASIS OF SOUND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES WHICH COULD HELP IN REVERSING AND IMPROVING BURMA'S DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION.

-- ASSUME RECEPTIVE POSTURE TO ANY BURMESE INITIATIVE TO ENTER INTO A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE ON REQUESTS FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE IN A MULTILATERAL CONTEXT AND ARE LINKED TO POSITIVE STEPS TOWARD ECONOMIC REFORM.

D. NARCOTICS

-- CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE STRONGER ANTI-NARCOTICS MEASURES BY THE GUB IN AN EFFORT TO CURTAIL AND ULTIMATELY ELIMINATE THE WIDESPREAD CULTIVATION OF THE OPIUM POPPY AND THE RESULTANT ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND REFINED DERIVATIVES.

-- SUPPORT GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GUB AND UN NARCOTICS ORGANIZATIONS, FOCUSING ON CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAMS.

-- SEEK MEANS BY WHICH BURMESE-THAI RELATIONS CAN BE IMPROVED AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS GREATER COOPERATION ON NARCOTICS PROBLEMS.

-- BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE BILATERAL ASSISTANCE IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD KEEPING IN MIND THE LARGER OBJECTIVE OF STIMULATING THE GUB TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IN THIS AREA.

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E. OTHER

-- SEEK TO MAINTAIN AND IF POSSIBLE INCREASE EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND INFORMATION PROGRAMS, WHICH ARE THE ONLY ON-GOING US PROGRAMS IN BURMA, AND TO PROMOTE CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

-- EXPLORE MEANS BY WHICH THE US CAN BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO BURMESE REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. INGERSOLL

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